APPENDIX A
TYPES OF PROGRAM EVALUATIONS

Type of Evaluation	Purposes	Typical Evaluation Strategies
Needs Assessment	*Determine the nature and extent of the problems that a proposed or existing program should address.* Assess the needs of different stakeholders (e.g., program participants, NIH administrators). For proposed programs, develop appropriate program goals. Determine how a program should be designed or modified to achieve those goals.	Collect and analyze data from document reviews (including program records and literature reviews), databases, in-person and telephone interviews, focus groups, expert panels, structured observations, and/or questionnaires. Use results of data analyses to develop, revise, and/or prioritize program specifications and program goals.
Feasibility Study *Sometimes called an evaluability assessment*	*Determine whether conducting an evaluation is appropriate, design a process evaluation or outcome evaluation for a proposed or existing program, and/or determine whether the evaluation can be conducted at a reasonable cost.* Determine the optimal approach for evaluating a program. Assess which evaluation designs and data collection strategies can or should be used. Often serves as a Phase 1 evaluation, designed to prepare for a full-scale (Phase 2) outcome evaluation. May include the development of computerized information systems (e.g., databases) as one component of the evaluation design.	Develop data collection instruments (e.g., interview guides, questionnaires, usability tests, coding systems, computerized information systems). Design and conduct pilot tests of data collection instruments and procedures. Design and conduct a pilot study of a small sample of units within the target population. Collect and analyze data from literature and document reviews, in-person and telephone interviews, focus groups, expert panels, structured observations, and/or questionnaires. Develop the final evaluation design (including the type of evaluation, program goals, performance measures, and study questions to be answered) based on the results of the data analyses. Determine if the proposed evaluation can be conducted at a reasonable cost.

Type of Evaluation	Purposes	Typical Evaluation Strategies
Process Evaluation	*Assess program operations.* Determine whether a program is being conducted as planned, whether expected output is being produced, and/or how program-critical processes can be improved. Assess the extent to which process goals have been achieved. Examples of *process goals* include adherence to a pre-established timeline and budget, an increased level of program activities, and a reduction in unit costs.	Collect and analyze data from computerized information systems (particularly internal databases), literature and document reviews, in-person and telephone interviews, structured observations, and/or questionnaires. Answer specific study questions using the data collected to determine if the program is functioning as intended and whether the program operates: 1) Significantly better (or worse) than in the past, 2) Significantly better (or worse) than a comparable program, and/or 3) In accordance with recognized standards of performance.
Outcome Evaluation	*Assess program effects.* Determine program accomplishments and effects (specifically whether a program is making progress and/or has fulfilled its goals). Examine the relationship between program activities and their effects, both intended and unintended, to identify why some program variations or strategies worked better than others. Assess the extent to which the program's intermediate and/or long-term goals have been achieved. Examples of *intermediate goals* include increased publications in peer-reviewed journals and more individuals obtaining doctoral degrees in health-related sciences. An example of a *long-term goal* is the discovery of a new treatment for a specific disease.	Collect and analyze data from computerized information systems, literature and document reviews, in-person and telephone interviews, structured observations, and/or questionnaires. Answer specific study questions using the data collected, conducting statistical analyses whenever possible, to determine if intermediate and/or long-term program performance is: 1) Significantly better (or worse) than in the past, 2) Significantly better (or worse) than that of a comparable program or control group, and/or 3) In accordance with recognized standards of performance.